

Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7864

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 3969

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, USUN, CA, IS, EG, CY, SY, UR, AS

SUBJ: POSSIBLE REDUCTION CANADIAN UNEF AND UNDOF

CONTINGENT

SUMMARY:

GOC REQUESTS US VIEWS ON POSSIBLE REDUCTION OF GOC CONTINGENT IN UNEF BY RECALL OF COMMUNICATIONS PERSONNEL AND WITHDRAWAL OF ALL GOC PERSONNEL FROM UNDOF. GOC HAS NOT YET MADE DECISION TO MAKE THESE REDUCTIONS AND US VIEWS ON DETAILED PROPOSAL WILL REPRESENT IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN CABINET CONSIDERATION OF MATTER. GOC HOPES FOR REPLY IN 7 TO 10 DAYS. END SUMMARY

EXTAFF DIRECTOR FOR DEFENCE RELATIONS MARSHALL CALLED IN POL-COUNS OCTOBER 17 TO DISCUSS GOC INTENTIONS REDUCE ITS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN MIDDLE EAST. REFERRING TO SECSTATE MACEACHEN'S PLEDGE TO SECRETARY KISSINGER DURING LATTER'S RECENT VISIT TO OTTAWA TO CONSULT ON THIS ISSUE WITH THE US BEFORE ANY DECISION
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TAKEN BY GOC, MARSHALL SAID US SHOULD LOOK UPON THIS APPROACH

AS INITIATION OF SUCH CONSULTATIONS. GOC WOULD CLEARLY APPRECIATE IT IF THEY COULD HAVE US REACTION WITHIN 7-10 DAYS TO FOLLOWING:

1. NO GOC DECISION HAS YET BEEN TAKEN TO MAKE REDUCTIONS IN CANADIAN CONTINGENTS IN PEACEKEEPING ROLES IN MIDDLE EAST AND NO SUCH DECISION WILL BE TAKEN UNTIL THE FULL RANGE OF IMPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, ONE OF WHICH IS THE US VIEW.

2. THE CONSIDERATIONS STIMULATING GOC CONSIDERATION OF A POSSIBLE REDUCTION (E.G. NEED FOR COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALISTS IN CANADA AT TIME OF 1976 OLYMPICS) ARGUE THAT ANY REDUCTION MADE SHOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY SUBSTANTIAL TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE RELIEF AND SHOULD NOT BE SIMPLY AN ACROSS-THE-BOARD SLIMMING DOWN. THE PROPOSALS FOR A REDUCTION WHICH THE GOC HAS PLACED BEFORE THE UN SECRETARIAT CALLING FOR: (A) GOC TO WITHDRAW FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS FUNCTION IN UNEF WHICH WOULD REPRESENT A SAVING OF 120 MEN; (B) WITHDRAWAL OF THE ENTIRE CANADIAN COMPONENT IN UNDOF, A SAVING OF 150 MEN; (C) THE AUGMENTATION OF THE GOC AIR UNIT BY THE ADDITION OF FOUR HELICOPTERS, AS REQUESTED BY THE UN, WHICH WOULD REPRESENT AN ADDITION OF 50 EXTRA PERSONNEL; (D) THE CONSEQUENT NET TOTAL REDUCTION IN UNEF/UNDOF WOULD BE 220, LEAVING 630. (MARSHALL EMPHASIZED THAT THESE FIGURES WERE NOT NECESSARILY PRECISE BUT SHOULD BE TAKEN AS ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE.)

3. ANOTHER ELEMENT IN THE GOC CONSIDERATION IS THE AVAILABILITY OR LACK THEREOF OF ANOTHER COUNTRY TO FILL THE ROLES ABANDONED BY THE GOC. GOC RECOGNIZES THAT A SUBSTITUTE COUNTRY WOULD HAVE TO BE BOTH TECHNICALLY CAPABLE OF PERFORMING THE FUNCTIONS REQUIRED AND ALSO POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE TO ALL SIDES. THERE HAS BEEN SOME THOUGHT GIVEN TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT AUSTRALIA MIGHT FILL THIS ROLE. GOC UNDERSTANDS THAT AUSTRALIA CAN MEET THE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND FEELS CONFIDENT THAT AUSTRALIA, HAVING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO ISRAEL. THE GOC HAS RECEIVED CONFLICTING VIEWS ON THE ACCEPTABILITY OF AUSTRALIA TO THE EGYPTIANS AND ESPECIALLY TO THE SYRIANS. MARSHALL NOTED THAT GOC HAS NOT APPROACHED AUSTRALIA ON THE SUBJECT SINCE IT DOES NOT FEEL THAT IT IS CONFIDENTIAL

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ITS ROLE TO DRUM UP A REPLACEMENT. WHILE UP UNTIL RECENTLY GOA HAD INDICATED INTEREST IN TAKING ON PEACEKEEPING FUNCTIONS, MARSHALL UNDERSTANDS THAT RECENT FINANCIAL STRAITS MAY HAVE COOLED THEM OFF ON THE IDEA.

4. ANOTHER FACTOR IN THE EQUATION ARISES FROM THE FACT THAT LOGISTIC PLAN FOR UNEF AND UNDOF WAS THE RESULT OF COMPLEX NEGOTIATIONS WHICH FINALLY SETTLED ON A BALANCED FORCE MADE

UP OF POLES AND CANADIANS. THE GOC IS UNCERTAIN HOW THE USSR WOULD REACT TO A PROPOSAL THAT A PORTION OF THE CANADIAN CONTRIBUTION BE REPLACED BY AN AUSTRALIAN CONTRIBUTION. GIVEN NOT ONLY GENERAL SOVIET PREOCCUPATION WITH HAVING POLITICAL GEOGRAPHIC BALANCE ASSURED IN THESE PEACEKEEPING FORCES BUT ALSO THEIR CURRENT MALAISE AT BEING LEFT OUT OF THE RECENT MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, GOC RECOGNIZES THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT SEIZE UPON THE GOC PROPOSITION TO MAKE DIFFICULTIES.

5. THERE IS ALSO THE QUESTION OF TIMING. OCTOBER 24 IS THE DATE ON WHICH THE EARLIER UNEF MANDATE MUST BE RENEWED. GIVEN THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS IN SINAI THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THIS OCCASION WILL TAKE MORE THAN A PRO FORMA LOOK AT THE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNSYG ON RENEWAL. MARSHALL FELT THAT ALTHOUGH GOC PROPOSAL WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE SOME EFFECT ON THE EXTENT OF THE MANDATE SOUGHT BY UNSYG, HE WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THE UNSYG REPORT WOULD NOT EMBODY THE ASSUMPTION OF A GOC REDUCTION.

6. ASKED ABOUT UN INITIAL REACTION, MARSHALL SAID IT WAS ONE OF "HORROR." UN SECRETARIAT REPORTEDLY REALLY GASPED OVER THE PROPOSITION OF THE DEPARTURE OF CANADIAN COMMUNICATIONS ELEMENT SINCE THIS IS A HIGHLY TECHNICAL ROLE AND COMMAND OF ENGLISH ESSENTIAL. UN SECRETARIAT ALSO POINTED OUT TO GOC THAT WHILE CANADIANS MIGHT LOOK UPON MIDDLE EAST PEACEKEEPING AS A SINGLE ENTITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF EFFECTING REDUCTIONS, UNDOF WAS A QUITE SEPARATE AND DISTINCT ENTITY FROM UNEF AND IT WOULD CREATE AN ESPECIALLY KNOTTY PROBLEM IF GOC SHOULD OPT OUT OF THAT ENTIRE PEACEKEEPING OPERATION. ALSO, WITH 5-MONTH PERIOD NEEDED TO GET NEW SYSTEM FOR UNEF IN PLACE, UN SECRETARIAT WAS MOST UNHAPPY AT THE PROSPECT THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE TO MOVE NEW ELEMENTS INTO THAT AREA IN THE MIDDLE OF MOUNTING THE NEW SYSTEM.

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7. GOC WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO HAVE THE US LOOK AT THIS PROPOSAL NOW THAT IT IS AVAILABLE IN MORE DETAIL AND PROVIDE REACTIONS FROM THE US PERSPECTIVE. MARSHALL INDICATED THAT US INPUT, WHICH WOULD FORCE GOC CABINET TO BALANCE PRACTICAL DOMESTIC WITH INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, SHOULD "STRENGTHEN OUR HAND." (PRESUMABLY, MEANING EXTAFF HAND IN SEEKING TO RESIST REDUCTION). MARSHALL ADDED THAT HE WISHED TO EMPHASIZE THE INFORMALITY OF THIS APPROACH TO THE US, THAT GOC WAS CONSULTING ONLY WITH US AND UN SECRETARIAT AND THAT THUS THESE DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE TREATED WITH UTMOST CONFIDENTIALITY. MARSHALL ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT PRESSURES FOR REDUCTIONS IN UNEF AND UNDOF BORE NO RELATION TO CANADIAN UNFICYP SINCE THE PROBLEM IS WITH THE SPECIALIST ELEMENTS IN UNEF/UNDOF, A PROBLEM NOT PRESENTED BY STRAIGHT PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN CYPRUS.

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